

4. Pollution Control Efforts Subbasin Assessment – Water Quality Concerns and Status

The USFS (Boise National Forest) is the primary land manager in the South Fork Payette River Subbasin, with one exception. The Sawtooth National Recreation Area manages the wilderness portion of the subbasin. Management of the subbasin is guided by the Boise (Boise National Forest 2003) and Sawtooth (Sawtooth National Forest 2003) National Forest Plans. Forest practices are also managed by the Idaho Department of Lands under the authority of the Idaho Forest Practices Act.

Sawtooth Wilderness Area

The Sawtooth Wilderness Area is administered by the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. Goals for the wilderness area are written in the Sawtooth Forest draft plan (Sawtooth National Forest 2003). The wilderness area covers all or a portion of the upper South Fork Payette, Pinchot-Fall, Mink-Lake, Goat Creek, Baron Creek, and Grandjean HUC6 watersheds. In addition to the water quality goals and objectives outlined in the Sawtooth Forest draft plan, the Sawtooth Wilderness Area is managed for primitive, wilderness-oriented recreation. Restrictions guidelines are placed on group-size of users, livestock grazing and other domestic animals (including pets such as dogs), camp site location, campfires, and sanitation. Bicycles, carts, motorized vehicles, and aircraft are not allowed. Livestock grazing is limited to pack and saddle stock. Timber harvest, placer and dredge mining are not allowed. Although the wilderness area is roadless, over 200 miles of trails are maintained. There are no South Fork Payette River stream segments listed on the §303(d) list in the Sawtooth Wilderness Area.

Boise National Forest

Primary water quality goals in the Boise Forest plan (Boise National Forest 2003) are to meet CWA requirements, delist §303(d) listed stream segments, and to meet Idaho water quality standards. The Boise National Forest has set an objective of meeting state water quality standards within five years. The goal of the Boise National Forest concerning roads is to progressively reduce adverse effects. Appendix D contains excerpts from the forest plan and highlights some of the efforts planned for the South Fork Payette River watershed.

Idaho Forest Practices Act

The Idaho Forest Practices Act was passed in 1974 and has been amended eight times. The Idaho Department of Lands administers the Forest Practices Act through IDAPA 20.02.01 Rules Pertaining to the Idaho Forest Practices Act (Idaho Department of Lands 2000). These rules describe minimum standards and administrative procedures for conducting forest practices in Idaho. Forest practices covered by these rules include forestland conversion, timber harvest, treatment of waste materials, cumulative watershed effects, road construction, road maintenance, residual stocking, reforestation, use of chemicals and petroleum products, slash management, and prescribed fire. These rules apply to federal, state and private lands.

Idaho Transportation Department

The road cuts along Highway 21 between the Grandjean turnoff and Banner summit are a source of sediment in the subbasin. During stochastic precipitation events, erosion from the road cuts causes high suspended sediment levels in Canyon Creek, which in turn causes the South Fork Payette River to become extremely turbid for two to three days at a time. DEQ intends to work with the Idaho Department of Transportation to explore ways to mitigate these sediment sources. Figures 48 through 51 show examples of areas that need attention.



Figure 48. Highway 21 road cut



Figure 49. Highway 21 road cut



Figure 50. Highway 21 road cut



Figure 51. Highway 21 road cut